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ABSTRACT

Attention is drawn to aspects of the transfer of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) expertise to both developing and developed nonnative English-speaking countries. It is maintained that: (1) several facts that have nearly the strength of canonical truths in the West reveal an ignorance of, and perhaps an indifference to, the socio-cultural, attitudinal, pragmatic, and even economic realities of Afro-Asia; (2) the contexts, motivations, methods, means, objectives, and traditions of learning ESL in the countries referred to by Kachru (1988) as the Outer and Expanding Circles create the need for a revision or redefinition of the concept of ESL and also of the theoretical orientation of second language learning that is currently fashionable; and (3) The number of nonnative speakers of English and the changing status of English in the world are convincing enough to change the ethos and power structure of current ESL practices. (DJD)

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FROM KRASHER TO ASHEN: ETHNOCENTRISM AND UNIVERSALITY IN TESOL

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From Krasher to Ashen: Ethnocentrism and Universality in TESOL

Scenario 1: Michael Swan and Katherine Walter report on a new methodology (sic!) of language teaching based on the principle of Sensory Deprivation Research developed as an outgrowth of the work of such researchers as Gattegno, Morton, Lazanov and Watanabe, consisting of five stages: Disorientation, Exposure, Sensory Deprivation, Creative Hallucination, and Resocialization (Swan and Walter 1982).

Scenario 2: Linju Ogasawara from the Japanese Ministry of Education warns at the Georgetown Round Table about the dangers of the over-zealous application of `hot from the oven' linguistic theories from the West in English teaching in Japan (Ogasawara 1983).

Scenario 3: Peter Medgyes, an English teacher in Hungary laments:

> The philosophy of the communicative approach, like that of all dogmas, is vulnerable. Only a fool would dare denounce the axiomatic truths it disseminates: humanism, care and share, equality, ingenuity, relaxation, empathy, self-actualizing, and the rest. Who would admit in public, or even to themselves that these impeccable principles are mere slogans? How could one claim to be a true pedagogue while declaring that the burden is far too heavy and one would fain flush the whole lot down the nearest drain? (Medgyes 1986:??)

Scenario 4: Liu Xian (1988) from Jilin University in China explains how imported humanistic methods are unworkable in China and how Chinese teachers of English have turned out fluent

works for the Chinese, and foreigners should not meddle with the civilization that produced silk, acupuncture, gunpowder and the great Wall.

For several decades now, Western knowledge, Western ideas, Western expertise and Western technology have been systematically being transferred to non-Western societies, with the best of intentions. Thanks to British and American colonial and economic influence, English language expertise has been the most sought after and popular of Anglo-American expertise even in countries where other kinds of cooperation and transfer of expertise have been politically troublesome. As a result of this world-wide Anglomania, native English speakers (NS) are very much in demand as teachers and models in many non-native speaking (NNS) developed countries as well as in quite a few developing countries. Moreover, NNS developing countries also depend upon NS countries for expertise in the theory and practice of second and foreign language learning and teaching. Most ESL teacher training programs in NS countries reflect the need to transfer the advanced Western language teaching expertise to the developing countriesby their willingness to take in large numbers of trainees from abroad and by focusing their course content to incorporate ESL conditions abroad. Many teacher training and English language teaching programs in the developing countries also show the results of such transfer of Western expertise.

What I would like to do here is to draw attention to some aspects of the transfer of expertise that I see as directly relevent to TESOL. Firstly, several facts about ESL that nearly have the strength of canonical truths in the West (particularly in the U.S.) reveal an ignorance of and perhaps an indifference to the socio-cultural, attitudinal, pragmatic and even economic realities of Afro-Asia, the populous part of the English-using and English-hungry world. Secondly, the contexts, motivations, methods, means, objectives and traditions of learning English as a second language as well as the success in proficiency achievement in areas of the world that Kachru (1988) calls the outer and expanding circles of English create a need for a revision if not a redefinition of the concept of ESL and also of the theoretical orientations of second language learning that are currently fashionable. Thirdly, the sheer number of non-native speakers of English by the turn of the century, and the changing status and role of English in the world are impelling enough to change the ethos and power structure of current ESL practices, and so the native speaker teachers (abroad) must prepare themselves for the consequent modified roles they should fit into.

More specifically, I want to point out that:

1. ESL abroad is no the transference of the Linguistic and Applied Linguistic technology of NS countries on to the rest of the world, developing or otherwise, in order to `modernize' them.

2. In the context of world ESL, `modern' may mean not very much more than what is currently fashionable in the NS countries.
3. Some of the recent trendy, more `humanistic' approaches and methods may be unworkable, unproductive or even unwise in places and under conditions that are quite unlike those that gave birth to them, and so ESL in the world at large will dicatate a different centre of gravity for the methodological perspective.

Most modern knowledge developed in the West (Europe and the New World), and was willy-nilly transferred onto Afro-Asia and South America. Needless to say, much of it will appear ethnocentric to the non-West. Linguistics is no exception. How else does one explain the IPA having different symbols for phonetic elements of low function load but representing the phonology of Euroean languages, and making do with diacritics for high function load phonetic elements in `barbarian' languages? Every classification of Indo-European languages I have seen (including the ones used in India) gives separate billing for Frisian and Flemish but not for Bengali or Hindi although the speakers of the latter pair outnumber the former 100 to 1. There are those who point out that the tree model of TG prefers European languages and that `the Sound Pattern of English' used to form the basis for sound patterns of any language in the world.

Theorizing in the learning of second language has not been free from ethnocentrism either. Second language learning in general is often de facto equated with the learning of English as a second language, and theories of SLA have been formulated on research based largely on ESLA. This confusion of a general phenomenon with a particular instance of it, I believe, has led to ethnocentric weaknesses in theorizing. Ellis (1986:248) lists seven theories of SLA, reflecting, he claims, the variety of perspectives evident in SLA studies.

I. The Acculturation Model
II. Accommodation Theory
III. The Discourse Theory
IV. The Monitor Model
V. The Variable Competence Model
VI. The Universal Hypothesis
VII. The Neuro-functional Theory

However, four of these presume that second language is acquired or learned (the much-talked Corderian or Krashenian distinction between them is irrelvent here) in the target language (TL) environment. They are therefore strictly not theories of SLA or SLL, but theories of what their originators conceive of or define as SLA/SLL. These four include the theories of SLA most popular with teacher trainers in the U.S. and therefore they occur more commonly as THE theories of SLA in ESL teacher training programs

in U.S. institutions. For hundreds of American trained ESL teachers a willing suspension of disbelief if not doctrinal faith in the universal infallibility of the theories and models of Krashen and Schumann, for instance, have been a ritual required for induction into and membership in the profession. Reference to the "Monitor" and "Input", as it was with "competence" and "performance" in the 60's and 70's, has also been for students and researchers the key to establish the credentials of their work.

While the very frame of Schumann's experiment leading to his "Acculturation Model" defines SLA to mean learning the TL English in the TL environment in the TL speaking country (U.S.A.), Krashen implicitly presumes the same, as virtually all of the support he produces for his various claims are experiments done with SL learning in the TL speaking country, in effect, mostly ESL in the U.S.A. In fact at one point Krashen (1982:35) brazenly claims he has presented the entire literature on the question of the effect of language teaching on acquisition without citing a single European source. The point I am trying to make here is not that Krashen is to be discredited, but that SLA theory draws upon ESLA, which, in the United States, is what is generally done by foreigners known as internationals, or immigrants knows as ethnics, or minorities known as LEP learners. SLA is thus conceived of as occurring in native speaking environments, and the goal of SLA is often seen as integrating

with the TL community. Unfortunately, SL learners in the U.S. are often people who are politically and economically less privileged and for whom ESLA is seen as a means of full participation and better chances of acceptability, advancement and status in life in the adopted country.

There are several theoretical and practical consequences to this feeling in the "collective unconscious" about SL learners being the substratum community, two of which I'd like to mention here. First, English language deficiency is sometimes seen as cognitive deficiency or lack of knowledge of the world, and ESL learners both in TL countries and abroad often get patronized or talked down to by native speakers (Nayar 1988, Trivonovic 1976). Second, on the theoretical side, the persepctive of sociolinguistic research involving SL speakers will have to modified in terms of greater context sensitivity. For example, in a study concerning a particular aspect of learner behaviour in the TL, like greeting or complimenting, the learner is often evaluated from the point of view of the target psycho-social and cultural motivations for such behaviour. Since a lot of such research is typically done in the context of the non-native speaker (NNS) in native speaker (NS) country (which is perceived as the typical ESL situation), the perspective of the analysis rests on the assumption that the acceptable or desirable behaviour is the target behaviour. The point that I am making

here is not that the findings of such research are invalid or irrelevant, but that their validity or relevance with reference to SLL are limited to NS dominant interactions in the NS cultural and language context, where the onus of pragmatic and communicative competence in English is on the NNS. However, it will be good to remember that there are umpteen situations where although the language of communication may be English, the dominanant and hence desirable pragmatic orientation will be non-English. Wolfson (1988:10), investigating complimenting behaviour in NS-NNS situations observes: `part of the problem is that learners tend to transfer their own sociolinguistic rules to TL interaction.' While this may be seen as a "problem" of the NNS is NS countries, I don't think it is particularly or even exclusively a second language learner's problem. It is important to remember that the laugh would be at the other side of the mouth if the interaction, albeit in English, were on the NNS's turf. (One incidental "problem" with such research and reporting is that they contribute to subliminal and subversive steretyping. In Wolfson (1988), for instance, the word "problem" or its synonyms are so often collocated with the NNS that the overall profile of the NNS learner is a cross between an unsocial grouch and a bungling, culturally unrefined klutz.) In the context of communication in English outside NS countries, the English language often becomes the vehicle of non-English pragmatics and

ethnographic norms, where it may not be the NNS who is the "problem"!

It is to this other ESL region that I wish to move now. Kachru (1988) presents the sociolinguistic profile of World English, very rightly, as three concentric circles: the Innner Circle, comprising the NS countries; the Outer Circle, representing most of the former non-white Brtish colonies, where English is a second language (though perhaps not as the term is defined or understood in America); and the Expanding Circle, where English, though technically a foreign language, serves important instrumental functions and has the potential of becoming a second language. Apart from these, there are also countries like The Netherlands, where almost everyone speaks English with near native fluency, and like Hungary and Mozambique, where English teaching may be called TENOR (Teaching English for No Obvious Reason) as Medgyes (1986) calls it. The Outer Circle has a combined population three times that of the NS Inner Circle, and the Expanding Circle has nearly five times the population of the Inner Circle. Thus, even if only 20% from the Outer Circle and 10% from the Expanding Circle are English speaking, they will still outnumber the NS Inner Circle.

Despite the difference in the use and function of English, there is a great deal in common between the Outer Circle nations (India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ghana etc.) and the Expanding Circle

nations (China, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia etc.). As Kachru (1988) points out, they do not particularly intend to learn English to communicate directly with NSs, nor do they wish to model their English after any NS variety. With the exception of Japan and the U.S.S.R., they also share the Third World status not just economically but in their more "traditional" social and cultural values and institutions. Countries in the Expanding Circle also depend to a greater extent on native speaker teachers, as they have no institutionalized local forms of English yet as a teaching or performance model. Although most of the teaching of ESL in the real world out there is done by NNS teachers (a fact which is often not fully recognized by the NS pundits), the NS countries are still seen as leaders and trend-setters in the theory, practice and technology of language teaching, and academics from both the Outer and Expanding Circle countries look to Britain and the U.S. for advanced training, technology and literature. What we often have, as a result, are conflicts and incompatibilities: between native theoreticians and non-native practitioners, between native theories and non-native environments, and between native methodology and non-native teaching situations.

There are, no doubt, several differences in the nature and function of ESL in NS countries and ESL abroad as is even indicated by different interest sections of TESOL. Two important

differences in purpose and model were mentioned earler, viz. that not all learn English primarily to communicate or integrate with the NS community and that many learners have neither native competence or dialect model in mind. (Many, like me, do learn English and become proficient without any notion or care of what a native speaker or native dialect is, Schumann (1978) and his Alberto notwithstanding.) There are also quite a few other differences. Firstly, most ESL learners abroad, particularly in the Outer Circle, do not see learning a second or third language as a big issue, conditioned as they are to accepting multilingualism as a way of life. So ESL learning is neither as stressful or anxiety-ridden as it is implied and perceived by the Affective Filter Hypothesis, or by some of the "humanistic" methods, as there is little pressure by a superstratum community to integrate or assimilate, or no particular sociolect to conform to. The non-integrative motivation, however, does not detract from the desire to learn either, as has been mandated by the oft-cited binary classification of Gardner and Lambert (19??). (See Shaw 1981). Secondly, most of the learning is achieved in what Krashen might call "acquisiton poor" environments, with varying degrees of emphasis on the four basic skills as demanded by the goal of learning. An Indian, for instance, who has no intention of moving from his native state, or has no `show off' ambitions, learns ESL only to read newspapers or fiction in English, or

possibkly to meet some the bureaucratic writing needs. And nobody can be sure if his acquisition poor circumstances will have actually made his acquisition poor. Thirdly, as English is not used for the entire gamut of communicative functions, there is a different focus on affective factors of interaction like ego-permeability, face, self and other image etc. The normal `English' conventions may not apply to these factors at all or may only partly apply. And finally, the variables in the socio-cultural and affective domains of language learning as well as the political and economic factors that control language policy, language use and language availability make ESL learning and teaching in these contexts so very different as to make many of the much-publcized "methods" inoperable and unsuccessful. Berns (1985) mentions how countries like Germany, Japan, Egypt, Brazil and India are restructuring English teaching to suit their own contexts, purposes and needs. The frustrations and difficulties of using "modern" innovative methods in the newest and potentially largest ESL field, China, have also been adequately documented (See Xian 1988).

Typically, the methodology component of a teacher training course in the U.S. would list several methods and present them all with the same `billing' so to say, as equal members of the methods family, or as equal co-hyponyms of "method". Richards and Rodgers (1986) lists ten different such and Larsen-Freman (1986)

lists eight. However, what I would like to point out is that from the point of view of universality of applicability, they are not all equal members of a family and that some are indeed more equal than others. This is not a censure on some methods or an euology on some others for they may all be `honourable gentlemen', as Brutus might say they are. All I am saying is that in the global perspective, to use metaphors from pharmacology, some are contra-indicated, some are slow acting, and some are trusted and reliable and free from side effects. The fact that these various methods appear to have the same intellectual and commercial market share in the U.S. conceals the realities of the global ESL.

The non-Western world is really not ready for the methods explosion that has happened in recent years in the West, particularly in North America. Although the reasons for this are complex, three factors predominate. First of all, there has always been a technology lag between the developed and developing nations. Secondly, to throw or stow away what is traditional for something recent and fashionable is not a risk many would like to take. Thirdly, and I think this is the most important, many of the new humanistic methods that have mushroomed in the vigorous and competitive American Academia contain presuppositions, presumptions and principles that are too culture specific even to catch on, let alone take roots elsewhere. The details of why most

parts of Afro-Asia are not conducive to methods like Suggestopedia, Counselling or Community Language Learning, TPR and the Silent Way are too varied and complex to list here. However, I shall briefly trace some common cultural , sociological and pedagogic factors that make these rather 'esoteric' methods unworkable in many parts of Afro-Asia. From personal experience in training NNS teachers to cope with functional-notional curriculum, I know that the language demands of such an approach and curriculum are so draining even when the teacher is a NS. In practice, since this is only an approach, the teachers, when overwhelmed, always go back to the security of text-based teaching, or whatever else they are comfortable with. Methods like the TPR, Suggestopedia and Counselling Learning presume many facts that are realities in the West but not quite so in many parts of the world. Some of these presumptions are given below.

1. One has to make teaching/learning a pleasurable experience
2. Learning is self-motivated.
3. Students will find informal interaction with the teacher comfortable
4. Classes will be of a convenient size with a comfortable teacher-learner ration.
5. Teaching aids, material and gadgetry are freely available.

6. Teachers enjoy their work and will very conscientiously put their best into it if left unsupervised or unsupported by prescribed curriculum, text books and materials.
7. Teaching and learning can happen with no interference, bureaucratic or otherwise, and teachers have a free hand in doing what they want to do.
8. Learners have literate cultures.
9. Oral communiatin with NSs is the main goal of SLL.
10. Cognitive, learning and communication strategies and styles are universal.

In short, the fact remains that except for possible isolated cases, these methods do not have either consistent universality of appeal or feasibility of application. A brief insight into some of the realities of ESL teaching in the Outer and Expanding Circles can best be provided by extracts from an epistle from a U.S. trained ESL teacher abroad: 'What we do here wouldn't make TESOL Quarterly, but maybe that is a good thing. We teach grammar at great length and the students seem to love tedious fill-in-the-blank exercises...Basically, I don't care if I read another article about ESL theory the rest of my life. It is all an attempt to make a science of something that is clearly not.'[1]

To conclude, I would like to make a few suggestions about modifying SLL theory and practice in the larger global sociolinguistic context of ESL.

1. SL theory should account for both the versatility and variability in the human capacity to internalize any language under any condition, even when the learner is removed from the NS context and input.

2. The theory should explain the role and effect of self and other instruction on the learning of a language.

3. The tenets of the theory should be provable empirically and not rationalistically.[2]

4. The theory should account for similarity/differences between first, second and nth language learning.

5. The theory should provide support for all and any of the teaching methods.

6. Second language teaching methods should not only have firm support from linguistic, pedagogic and learning theories, but methods must also acknowledge their context sensitivity and potential for socio-cultural constraints that decide their universality of applicability.

7. Statements about constraints on methods should lead to the creation of a proper perspective in the taxonomic structure of methodology.

8. the methodology component in a training program for languae teachers should reflect the taxonomic sta us of the methods; that is, each of the so-called methods should be put in perspective according to its market share in world ESL also, and not just

according to the charisma of its originator or the commando value it has in the Euro-American scene.

Notes

1 The extracts are from a real letter from an American teacher abroad, who does not wish his name or whereabouts to be revealed.

2 Krashen (1985:48), for instance, says,`The Input Hypothesis, is in my opinion, the most important one in SLA theory today because (sic!) it attempts to answer the central question: How is language acquired.' I have always attempted to answer that central question too all my professional life. Does that make me the most important teacher?

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